The Triune God and Tripartite Man: *A Study in God's New Testament Economy*

By Kevin Elias Hartwell

1. The Triune God

The New Testament reveals one God eternally existing as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three are co-equal, co-eternal, and coinhering. They are not three gods nor three parts of God, but three distinct Persons sharing the one undivided divine essence.

John 10:30 — "I and My Father are one."
John 14:10–11 — "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?... Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me."
Matthew 28:19 — "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
2 Corinthians 13:14 — "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

2. Two Great Becomings in God's Economy

The New Testament presents two pivotal becomings.

First: John 1:14 — "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."
Second: 1 Corinthians 15:45 — "...The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."

The first becoming accomplished incarnation for redemption. The second reveals the resurrected Christ available to impart His life into believers. These two becomings summarize the movement of God's New Testament economy from incarnation to impartation.

3. The Essential and Economical Aspects of Christ

The New Testament presents Christ in two complementary aspects. Essentially, He is life to the believer. Economically, He is the exalted Lord who empowers His people for testimony.

John 20 emphasizes the inward impartation of life. Luke 24 and Acts 1–2 emphasize the outward clothing with power for God's testimony. These are complementary rather than contradictory.

4. John 20:22 and Acts 2

John 20:22 records the resurrected Lord breathing into His disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit." This signifies the impartation of divine life.

Acts 2 records the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled disciples, equipping them for public witness and inaugurating the church's testimony before the nations.

The inward reception of life and the outward clothing with power together present a balanced understanding of the Spirit's work in God's economy.

5. Tripartite Man

Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "...may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless..."
Hebrews 4:12 distinguishes soul and spirit. Thus Scripture presents man as tripartite.

- **Spirit**: intuition, fellowship, conscience.
- **Soul**: mind, emotion, will.
- **Body**: hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching.

6. Humanity's Unique Place in Creation

According to Scripture, mankind alone is created in the image of God and uniquely possesses a human spirit capable of knowing, worshipping, and fellowshipping with God. The biblical presentation distinguishes humanity from the animal kingdom by humanity's unique vocation, moral accountability, and capacity for relationship with God.

7. Conclusion

The Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is one God, co-equal, co-eternal, and coinhering. In God's New Testament economy, the Word became flesh for redemption, and the last Adam became the life-giving Spirit for impartation. Man, created as spirit, soul, and body, was designed to receive and express God's life. The goal of God's economy is that redeemed believers know Christ inwardly, are empowered outwardly, and together express Him as His Body.